

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Annual Report of the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC) and Legislative Budget Request

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 605.110 (3) (a)-(f), KRS 158.135 (2) (a) (b) (4) 137, 505 KAR 1:080, KRS 15A.065

History/Background:

Existing Policy. The Kentucky General Assembly enacted the landmark Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) in 1990; however, the needs of state agency children were not specifically addressed. As a result, the Kentucky General Assembly in 1992 passed legislation establishing the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KRS 158.135). State Agency Children (SAC) are defined as “Children and youth in programs that contract with, are funded by or operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID).” In 1994, the eligibility for state agency children was expanded to include those youth located in state-operated and contracted day treatment, group homes, and residential placements. In 1998, the definition of state agency children was further expanded to include youth in therapeutic foster care and those confined to state-operated juvenile detention facilities. Currently, there are 100 KECSAC programs located in 54 school districts.

Because of their special needs, state agency children usually receive their educational services in the programs/facilities where they reside. This includes residential facilities, group homes, juvenile detention centers and hospitals, among others. The local school district where the SAC reside provides the educational services; however, the teachers deliver the educational services in the facilities where the SAC are located, rather than a traditional school. The educational services the youth receive are classified by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) as A6 Programs. The definition of an A6 Program is “a district-operated instructional program in a non-district-operated institution where the students are not referred to the program by the school district but rather by a community agency.”

KRS 158.135 requires that KECSAC report annually to the Chief State School Officer. These annual reports have always included information about the number and types of

A6 programs, but in recent years more attention has been focused on the quality of educational services and academic achievement of the students. Students in A6 programs are often academically challenged and face a multitude of behavioral and emotional challenges that serve as barriers to their educational attainment. KECSAC partners with local school districts to meet the educational challenges of our Commonwealth's most at-risk student population. The Department of Education has recently named eight (8) KECSAC education programs as Best Practice Sites for Alternative Education. This designation is part of the continued emphasis on educational services for state agency children. KECSAC, as an active partner with KDE, continues to provide professional development for teachers and administrators of state agency programs, annual monitoring of the effectiveness of the education program and supplemental funding to support the enhanced services offered to state agency children.

During the 2010-2012 budget cycle, the Kentucky Board of Education selected state agency children's programs as a priority budget item. During that session, KBE requested an increase in the KECSAC allocation of \$5 million. The increase was not granted during the legislative session. KECSAC has since identified a funding gap of \$8 million for local school districts serving state agency children, those children who are in the care or custody of the Commonwealth. This means that there is an \$8 million gap between what districts receive and what it costs to educate state agency children. KECSAC is requesting that the KBE identify state agency children as a budget priority in the upcoming legislative cycle and request an increase of \$8 million in the overall budget allocation for state agency children to be included in the KDE budget proposal for 2012-2014.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Increasing numbers of Kentucky students are receiving educational services in KECSAC (A6) programs. As these numbers of students grow, the quality of education services they receive in these programs becomes increasingly important in regard to reaching proficiency.

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Commissioner of Education

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